



GROWING A FALL VEGETABLE GARDEN

Erv Evans, Extension Associate

Many vegetables are well adapted to planting in the summer for fall harvest. Planting a fall garden will extend the gardening season so you can continue to harvest fresh produce after earlier crops have finished. The fall harvest can be extended even further by providing protection from early frosts or by planting in cold frames or hotbeds.

Many cool-season vegetables, such as carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts, produce their best flavor and quality when they mature during cool weather. In North Carolina, the spring temperatures often heat up quickly. Vegetables, such as lettuce and spinach, tend to bolt or develop bitter flavor when they mature during hot summer weather.

Growing a productive fall vegetable garden requires thoughtful planning and good cultural practices. July and August are the

main planting times for the fall garden. Table 1 provides recommended planting dates. Vegetables that have a 60 to 80 day maturity cycle should be planted around August 1 in the piedmont. Planting of quick maturing vegetables, such as turnips and leafy greens, can be delayed until September. Keep in mind that the planting dates can be as much as 7 to 10 days earlier in western North Carolina and 7 to 10 days later in the eastern North Carolina. Be sure to adjust the planting dates for your specific location. For a more accurate planting schedule, consult Figure 1 to determine the average date of the first killing frost in the fall. Count backwards from the frost date, using the number of days to maturity to determine the best time to plant in your area.

Preparing the Site

Before preparing the soil for a fall garden, you must decide what to do with the remains of the spring garden. In most cases, the

Figure 1. Average Date of the First Killing Frost in the Fall.



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